

Message Text

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AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PINR SCUL HU VT
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON APPOINTMENT OF NEW BISHOPS IN HUNGARY

REF: ROME 4438 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: APPOINTMENT OF TWO NEW BISHOPS TO VACANT POSITIONS IN HUNGARIAN CHURCH HIERARCHY AND TRANSFER OF TWO OTHER WHICH REFLECTS GOOD VATICAN AND HUNGARIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH RELATIONS WITH HUNGARIAN STATE ALSO SHOULD HAVE SALUTARY EFFECT OF INTRODUCING MORE YOUTHFUL BLOOD INTO CHURCH LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. PURPOSE OF VATICAN APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED REFTEL WAS TO FILL VACANT POSITIONS IN HIERARCHY OF HUNGARIAN CHURCH -- RESULTING FROM DEATH OF TWO BISHOPS -- AND EASE WORK BURDENS OF TWO AGING BISHOPS. IN FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS EMBASSY COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THESE NEW
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APPOINTMENTS.

3. MSGR LASZLO KADAR: KADAR HAS BEEN NAMED ARCH-BISHOP OF EGER, WHERE HE HAS SERVED BEFORE AND KNOWS WELL SUBORDINATE CATHOLIC CONGREGATIONS. HE IS YOUTHFUL FOR AN ARCHBISHOP (51) AND IS SAID TO HAVE MODERN ATTITUDE ON ROLE OF CHURCH IN SOCIETY. KADAR IS A

CISTERCIAN AND HAS CONNECTIONS WITH AMERICAN CISTERCIANS BASED IN DALLAS, TEXAS, WHOM HE VISITED IN 1976, WHEN HE TRAVELED TO THE UNITED STATES WITH CARDINAL LEKAI AND SEVERAL OTHER HUNGARIAN CHURCH LEADERS TO ATTEND WORLD EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS IN PHILADELPHIA. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE CLOSE TO HUNGARIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY, KADAR IS BEING GROOMED TO SUCCEED CARDINAL LEKAI, WHO PRESUMABLY WILL BE RETIRING IN SEVEN YEARS WHEN HE REACHES AGE OF 75.

4. MSGR LASZLO PASKAI: PASKAI, APPOINTED APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF VESZPREM, IS ALSO RELATIVELY YOUNG TO BE APPOINTED TO RANK OF TITULAR BISHOP. LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, LASZLO KADAR, WHO WAS FIRST APPOINTED TO VESZPREM AS AN APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR PRIOR TO HIS SUCCEEDING TO POSITION OF RESIDENT BISHOP, PASKAI MAY ALSO BE EXPECTED TO BE CONFIRMED AS RESIDENT BISHOP, THAT IS, BISHOP WITH FULL ADMINISTRATIVE AND SPIRITUAL POWERS, WITHIN A FEW YEARS.

5. MSGR JOZSEF BANK: BANK, WHOSE DUTIES BUT NOT TITLE ARE DIMINISHED FROM ARCHBISHOP TO BISHOP, WILL AT HIS OWN REQUEST BE RETURNING TO THE BISHOPRIC OF VAC. BANK, OVER 76, SOUGHT THIS LESS DEMANDING POST BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN IN FAILING HEALTH FOR SOME TIME.

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6. MSGR FERENC ROSTA: ROSTA, A PRIEST OF THE OLD SCHOOL WHO WAS TRAINED IN ROME PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II AND RETAINS GOOD TIES WITH THE VATICAN, WAS REWARDED WITH A BISHOP'S POSITION SO THAT AS AUXILIARY BISHOP HE COULD ASSIST THE AILING AND AGED (72) RESIDENTIAL BISHOP OF SZEKESFEHERVAR, IMRE KISBERK.

7. AS REPORTED REFTEL AND AS WE HAVE CONFIRMED LOCALLY, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO FRICTION BETWEEN VATICAN AND HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES OVER CURRENT APPOINTMENTS. ALL ARCHDIOCESES AND DIOCESES IN HUNGARY HAVE BEEN FILLED ONCE AGAIN, AFTER BRIEF VACANCIES, BY BISHOPS ACCEPTABLE TO VATICAN AND HUNGARIAN CHURCH. ONLY ONE BISHOP'S VACANCY REMAINS. IT IS ON STAFF OF CARDINAL LEKAI AT ESZTERGOM. THE INJECTION INTO THE HUNGARIAN CHURCH HIERARCHY OF TWO VIGOROUS AND RELATIVELY YOUTHFUL BISHOPS, EDUCATED AFTER WORLD WAR II, SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY CONSTRUCTIVE IN TERMS OF REVITALIZING THE CHURCH WHICH STILL SUFFERS IN ITS INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND PASTORAL WORK, EVEN AT THE VERY TOP, FROM A TOO OSSIFIED AND CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP. IF INDEED

LASZLO KADAR IS BEING GROOMED TO SUCCEED LEKAI IT
WOULD BE PROOF THAT VATICAN IS CONCERNED WITH THIS
PROBLEM. THE GROOMING OF KADAR WOULD SEEM LOGICAL,
MOREOVER, SINCE ONLY OTHER ARCHBISHIPS IN HUNGARY ARE
BANK, WHO HAS JUST TAKEN HIS FIRST STEP TOWARD RETIRE-
MENT, AND ARCHBISHIP JOZSEF IJJAS OF KALOCSA WHO IS
77, ALSO IN ILL HEALTH AND RUMORED TO BE ABOUT TO
RETIRE.
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